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G. W. WRIGHT
AND THE EARLY SETTLERS

G. W. WRIGHT
AND THE EARLY SETTLERS

by

A. F. Wright

A Reflection Book

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New York, N.Y.

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Chapter One

ARRIVAL

Dad Wright, as he was called by friends and neighbors, left Vernon County, Missouri, near Fort Scott, in March, 1888. I was only eight years old, but I never will forget us kids all a-waving good-bye as we passed the school house.

There were nine of us kids; one sister was younger than I. Mother had been bedfast a long time and the doctor told Dad he would have to travel and camp out. That was the only thing that would get her well. So he loaded all of us into the covered wagons and started west. We had three milk cows and two dozen hens.

We traveled slowly and camped early. We had a big tent. A storm came up and we put horses and cows in one end of the tent. We just crossed the Platte River. Mother started to get better in three weeks and was a helping with the cooking. She lived to the ripe old age of 89 years.

We got to Mason City, Nebraska, in April 1888. Dad found work with a man named McAndeffer. Those of us boys who were big enough worked.

I had four brothers and four sisters. There are only three of us left.

There was a lot of snow during the winter of 1889.

Dad had gone to Cherry County in 1887 and had filed on a tree claim over at the old Charlie Hoyt place, on south side of the valley. Charlie married my oldest sister, Josie. He got to be well-off. His eldest girl's son lives on the place now.

We lived there three years, but had no school, so we moved into a little house just east of Whitman, Nebraska. It was owned by George Sewell part of the summer. Dad got acquainted with Joe Medearis, who told him about a place in the west end of the South Prong Valley. He showed it to my Dad. Dad filed on it and lived there sixteen years, until he sold it and moved to Wood River, Nebraska. I stayed with Dad and Mother and helped him run the ranch until he sold it. He ran red Shorthorn cattle. They are big cattle. The cows would weigh 1600 lbs. in Omaha, and two-year-old steers, as much as 1300 lbs.

Chapter Two

SETTLING THE NEW LAND

There were no fences, only small pastures when we came to that country. There were but a few ranches. Dad Abbott lived where Carver Gentry now lives and Arthur Abbott—Ramond Lake. The Dr. Plumer ranch was north of Hyannis, Nebraska.

The ranches seven (7) and figure four (4) were all the ranches there were in the country. They didn't put up hay as we do now. The cattle grazed. The cattle would graze along the river in summer and come to the lake

in the wintertime. The canes were very tall, 8 to 10 feet high. The grass in the valleys was higher than a cow, but it was not mowed. As soon as they began to cut it, it got shorter and thicker. I know that when Dad first cut his hay in South Prong, it was so high one could hardly see a cow three hundred yards away. That was in 1894. We used to get a lot more snow then and had to dig the cattle out. We would see a hole in the drift and sometimes a horn sticking up out of the snow. There would be some dead cattle, but quite often some would be alive, those who got some air. But wouldn't live. As soon as the cold wind hit them, they would fall over and hardly kick. They had been too long without feed.

McAndeffer, the man my Dad worked for at Mason City in 1888, had some big fat hogs. They were snowed in under a shed for three days and nights. My father wanted to dig them out, but McAndeffer said they were probably dead and they had all they could do to save the cattle. The next day after the storm quit, those hogs came wallowing out over the drifts.

Chapter Three

AS TWO HOUSES

The houses all were soddies in those days That is what the houses were called. We would pick ground where the grass was thick rooted and plow four to five inches thick, and twelve to fourteen inches wide, and cut it in strips, two and a half feet long, then would lay one

layer length-wise, two wide, and the next layer would be crosswise to break the joints. It would take quite awhile to settle. We would leave six or seven inches to settle at doors and windows. Then we had to live in the house three or four months before we could plaster. It made a warm house in winter and was cool in summer. Such a house would last a long time, but we had to put fence around it to keep the cattle from rubbing against it. After they were plastered inside and out, they would last as long as forty years. They were clean. We used poles cut along the Snake River for rafters and a good-sized tree for a ridge log. It was at least a foot thick. At first we used brush on the roof and covered it with sod. There was no money those days. Everybody did his own work. If you were lucky enough to have a neighbor within miles to exchange work, you helped one another. Dad had boys old enough to help him. We smaller kids had to look after the cattle. We had to herd them on foot and, bare-foot at that; and there were plenty of thorns. We got so that we could go anywhere; nothing but cactus bothered us.

I remember that we were herding them once. My two older brothers and I. They took a notion to run: they smelled water, or just wanted to run, and we kids chased after them. My second brother, Emmett, got some cactus in his foot and Bee stopped to help him. That was a job, for the thorns stuck back so far that one could hardly pick them out.

I had the cattle stopped at a pond a half mile farther on. Emmett said, "Let's ride a couple of cows home." They were gentle, so we got them started up the valley. We got along well until they got into the home valley. We had a lot farther to go by road when they started

to run again. Flies had stung them. We all were thrown off, for we had nothing to hold on to.

What cattle there were in the country were wild. Some would come for you; others would run. We boys were herding the cattle one morning when quite a herd of cattle came at us. A bull was in the lead. We were sure scared. We had a big gray dog that would fight anything for us kids. We told him to take the bull. He kept throwing the bull by the nose when he tried to hook the dog. The bull was trying to get away. A cowboy had dinner with us a few days later. He told Dad that there must have been a gray wolf around. He had found a dead bull with its ears chewed off. We never said a word; we never told Dad for quite awhile after that.

My oldest brother, John, worked out and the man he worked for gave him a yearling white heifer. The dog took after her next and would have killed her, but we finally got him off of her. He was astraddle her neck, and she couldn't get up. He almost chewed her ears before we could get him loose. We had to choke him before he would quit.

We went to a spring to get water and the grass was so high that we heard the deer before we saw them. When we got on the hill, Shep was after them. We couldn't call him back, but he came to us after awhile; his ear was slit and one of his teeth was gone.

I went with my brother-in-law, Charlie Hoyt, to pick bones one day and found an Indian pipe near a buffalo head. I still have the pipe. It is red in color; it must have been made of clay and burned.

That was in the spring of 1891. I was ten years old, going on eleven. Charlie gave me a dime. I was tickled. Dimes were hard to get. Nowadays, give a kid ten dollars

and it is soon gone. In those days, a dollar a day was big pay. It was several years before wages went up and cattle were two to three cents a pound. Years later, it must have been 1900, Father and I sold our cattle to Mr. Vestus Corothers. He lived just south of Whitman, Nebraska. His place is owned by a man named Brown now. He doesn't stay on the ranch; he hires others to do the work.

Chapter Four

ABOUT INDIANS

My oldest sister and I were at her house one day when a big buck Indian came riding up to the door. He told us he wanted a drink of water. We couldn't understand him, so he went right by us and to the water bucket where he drank five dippers of water. He patted his stomach and said, "Coolie, Coolie." He waved his hand and said, "Squaw and papoose hunting." This was 1891. We used to see a pair of big gray wolves cross the road. We would see them about every week, sometimes going east and sometimes going west. We three boys, Emmett, Bee, and I got a big heavy No. 4 trap and set it. It was all we could do to set it. We drove a big stick in the ground near a cow that had died. A couple of mornings later, I saw the wolves crossing the valley going west and one of them had our trap on his hind foot. If we had wired it to a weight, we would have had him. Charlie Hoyt saw our neighbor who lived quite a way west; he had seen

the wolves. The one wolf still had the trap, but the man couldn't catch it. His horse ran out of wind.

Since I started this chapter about Indians, I will say some more about them. They broke out of the reservation, the Rosebud. They didn't get far until the soldiers stopped them. There were several Indians killed, but I don't remember how many soldiers were slain. They used the Howitzer cannon. The Rosebud Reservation is in South Dakota.

It was in the spring of 1892 that Dad sent Mother and us smaller ones to Whitman, Nebraska, only 20 miles south, a small town in Grant County, Nebraska. Dad and a couple of the older boys stayed at home.

Dad only stayed three years on account of school. More about that later. Dr. Plummer, from northeast of Hyannis, came to Dad's one day and asked Mother if he could get a watermelon from our patch. She told him to help himself if he could find any ripe ones. He went and looked and came back laughing and said that they were all citron, well ripened and that we would have to cook them for preserves. He took a couple home with him. The ground was covered with them.

Chapter Five

SCHOOL

We kids had to walk to school four miles. There were fifteen pupils in all. The country had begun to get more settled close to town.

Sometimes the snow was waist-deep in drifts. We would string out Indian-file with the older boy in the lead and our youngest sister, Essie, following. She was ten years old. We didn't mind that it sometimes snowed although we could hardly see. One day when we went to school it sure was snowing. The folks wanted us to stay home, but we were bound to go. We got to school, but no one showed up. We made a fire and got good and warm, got our lessons, ate our lunch and went home. We were a lot healthier than children are now.

Snow would drift in back of the house ten or twelve feet high. I would take the sled that I made and come down over that big drift. I would go for a long way down into the meadow. I would lie flat down. I had tied the wire fence up, so that I could go under. I would go 20 miles an hour, I expect, sometimes. Sometimes, I would miss my track and have to roll off. If I struck on both runners when I came over big drifts, I was all right. Once in awhile, I would hit on one runner and I would

go a-rolling. I got my sister to try it. Once was enough for her. The hill in back of the house was over one hundred feet high. Of course, the snow was sloping. I don't know how deep it was close to the top. I had a lot of fun. The snow would stay for weeks, according to the weather.

Sometimes, we would get a warm wind in February. We called it a Schnook wind. Water would be running by sun-up. It sure would take the snow and ice. Sometimes, it would turn cold at nightfall and freeze that night. It would be so slick that you could hardly get anywhere with a horse unless he were shod all around. And they had to be sharp. After the horses got used to them, they liked to travel on the ice. I had my buggy team shod all around. If I were going by a lot of ice, they would go and get on the ice. My nephew was with me and he was afraid they would fall. They did not fall or slip. They sure could trot. My brother had a black team that he thought could trot. They couldn't begin to trot with my team.

There were no cars in those days. My brother was going with a young lass at Mason City. When we moved to Cherry County there was a period of a little over a year that he had not seen her and he wanted to go to see her. The only way was by wagon. So he got Mother and us two younger ones, my sister and me, into a covered wagon, a hundred and sixty miles to Mason City, Nebraska. One of my sisters lived there. We were gone a month. My brother went back that fall and they were married. They came back to the sandhills. They stayed on his claim and proved and sold it. They hardly got anything for it then. When the Kincaid Law was passed, he filed on a place seven miles north of Whitman. He improved and sold it and went back to Custer County,

at Mason City, and bought 160 acres of land where he raised his family. They had eight children, three boys and five girls. My brother and his wife lived there until their deaths. Three of the girls and a boy still are alive. Their granddaughter and family still live on the old home place one mile west and three south of Mason City.

Two of his girls live at Dexter, Iowa. The oldest boy died young, around 21, and the youngest boy started out. He wrote his folks from Texas. That is all they ever heard. He was just a kid then, around 17 years old. He had a good little Ford car. He never was around any of his family. His folks tried to find him, but couldn't get any trace of him. They thought he might have fallen in with someone who took his car and left him lying along the road; otherwise they surely would have heard something.

Chapter Six

MORE ABOUT DAD WRIGHT

He joined the 5th Cavalry in Missouri and fought all through the Civil War. He got an honorable discharge in 1865. He and Mother are both buried at Wood River, Nebraska.

Both of them lived to be quite old. My third oldest sister is still living. She is Mrs. Rachael Copenhaver of Aline, Oklahoma. She is 93, and will be 94 next September 1st. I am 81 years old and will be 82 on February 26, 1962.

I have quit trying to work hard. I and my second son's wife raise a good garden. I live with my children and enjoy it. We get along fine. I have three boys; their wives are nice to me. I think a lot of them. I have one daughter in Marysville, California. I do a lot of traveling to see her every 2 or 3 years. I took a trip on a plane and bus and covered eight thousand miles. I was gone from the 20th of January until the 14th of April. I saw a lot of Oklahoma, California and Oregon. I went to Portland and several other large cities, and over into Washington. I was in Oregon during the rainy season, but had to get out. I got asthma and could hardly catch my breath. I saw many states and cities, from the Gulf of Mexico to Houston, Corpus Cristie, Fort Worth and many other cities of Texas.

I have traveled in 20 states and Canada. My youngest son and I went to Manitoba, Canada, on a fishing trip two years ago. My son lives in Grand Island, Nebraska. We caught a lot of nice trout, 6 to 8 lbs. I got a 40-inch pike. I like to fish and hunt. I have killed the little white-tailed deer in Texas and the large mule deer in Nebraska, Wyoming, and Colorado. I used to go to Grand Junction, Colorado, every year for eight or ten years where I have folks, and on to the UnConhardi Reserve. That is eighty miles up in the mountains from Grand Junction. I like the mountains. Such nice cold water in the spring. Deer and cattle get fat there and there are not any flies to bother one.

Hunters used to come in there by the dozen, in fact, by the hundreds to hunt and camp at the springs. In 1945, I went out and hunted; the season had just opened. Ten of us left my nephew's place just before sun-up. I went half a mile from camp and sat down on a mountain side, so that I could see two patches of timber. We had looked

it up the day before. I didn't have to wait long before many of the hunters began to shoot. A doe came running out first, but I overshot. This first shot was about 250 yards. I waited awhile. There come a buck making for the same timber where I had the doe. I got him with the first shot. We were allowed one doe and one buck. I dressed the buck and tied my tag on it and went to get my nephew to bring his horses to take them to camp. We loaded the buck on one of the horses and went to get the doe. She was in the timber. They were shooting and cutting leaves off the trees above us. We got the doe and moved out of there in nothing flat. There was a soldier boy there. He had no luck, so I told him he could have the doe. He would duck every time a bullet sang overhead. I asked him why he ducked, and he said, "I'm getting out of here." There were ten deer hung up at camp by ten o'clock. We ate my doe for camp meat.

When I first began going up in the Uncompahgre Reserve to hunt, we would see from twenty-five to fifty deer in a bunch, but the last couple of years, they were scarce, especially the bucks.

I went elk-hunting a couple of times but no luck. I could hear them running in the timber. It was so thick that a man could hardly get through. They went through it on the run.

My youngest sister's son and I went one a.m. to get some cattle he'd left coming down the mountain. It was late, so he took a short cut home. We had gone by them. I looked around and saw some of them. Virgil asked me to wait. He would go and get them. I sat on the horse waiting and heard a great racket and the brush popping. Here came a big buck bounding out, close to me. He sure was going places.

I never got to see an elk or a moose, except in the Yellowstone Park in Wyoming. They are very big. The moose bulls weigh fifteen hundred pounds or more and the bull elk weighs as much as eleven hundred pounds.

Chapter Seven

MY YOUNGEST SISTER'S FAMILY

She was two years younger than I. She married young. She married a man by the name of George Shepardson. They raised five boys and two girls. Two of the boys are conductors on the CB&Q railroad of Grand Junction. They will soon be getting pensions. One works a crew in the potash mines in Colorado, close to Actah. One works in the Post Office at the Junction, and one lives in Milkauwee, Oregon. He owns a plating plant and gets orders from New York, Chicago, Canada, and from across the ocean. He did over a quarter of a million dollars in trade in 1960. I went out to see him.

I took a big airplane from Grand Island, Nebraska, to Omaha, Nebraska, to catch the *Pioneer*; a large plane, to Sacramento. It was eighty minutes to Denver, Colorado. We had engine trouble and that held us up for two hours. We had to land at Reno, Nevada, and take cars. It was so foggy at Sacramento that we could hardly see to land. There was a heavy fog after we left Reno, thirty or forty miles. We were due to land in Sacramento at 7:45 but didn't get there until 2 a.m. The plane personnel are

very helpful and even in the depot. I told them that I was hard of hearing and might not hear them call. They took my name and destination and came and got me and put me on the plane before they opened the gate. I checked my grip so that I wasn't bothered with it.

I had not seen my nephew who lives in Milwaukie for fifty years. He was just a boy, six years old, when I saw him last.

My Sis's oldest daughter lives in Grand Junction, Colorado, and her youngest one in Sacramento, California. She passed away three years ago. She had sixteen grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren. She was seventy-seven years old.

I have a brother in Santa Monica, California. He is three years older than I. I never hear from him anymore. We wrote several times and got no answer. I heard from one of my nephews that he was there. He had seen him. His wife has been dead several years. They had two girls. I think the oldest one lives in Santa Monica. I don't know where the youngest one lives. They did live in Grand Junction, Colorado.

My oldest sister's two girls, the Charlie Hoyt girls, still own the Hoyt Estate, or the biggest part of it. The oldest girl lives in Whitman, Nebraska. The youngest one still lives on the place given to her by her Father. There was one boy. His wife is still on the ranch that was left to him.

The girls married the Henderson Bros. Leo and her husband live on the ranch. They are well-off. He runs 1200 head of cattle, and altogether sells seven hundred or more calves every year, besides 150 head of other animals. His income tax runs up to over \$20,000 every year. He never goes on any trips. He only goes to town. He has

a plane, but his wife is afraid to ride in it. If he wants to make a quick trip, he takes his plane. I have been up with him a couple of times looking about the mills to see if cattle had water. He has two to three men. He keeps two married couples and usually one single man. He has nice houses, all modern, for them to live in. He contracts his hay, and stacks around fourteen hundred ton. His men cut and bale twenty thousand bales in several pastures and turn cattle on it. They don't move it. The cattle do good unless snow gets pretty deep; then they feed out of the stacks. They cable a stack on a big feedsled with a Farmall and a winch. It is all machinery now. There are hardly any horses used anymore. Some use a small caterpillar. Most ranchers use a blade on a tractor to make a trail in the snow so that the cattle can get at the hay better. They won't trample it in the snow.

In the early days our worst trouble was fuel. We had no wood or coal and no money to buy them with. We could get some willows by going fifteen miles down to Bush Lake which is the Pullman Cattle Company now. We had to burn cow chips. It sure took a lot of them. We would carry in a couple tubs of chips and carry out a tub of ashes. They made a quick fire and went out just about as quickly.

I picked up chips for six weeks in the fall for the Sweeneys. I had a pile of them larger than some of the houses. I got \$20.00 per month. Then I picked a lot of them for my second oldest brother and then went to school and had to pick a lot more chips. We could get some old railroad ties. They burned pretty good. They were heavy to load on a wagon. If they were taken up, they were heavy. We had to get them before they got

dry or the section boss had to burn them. Sometimes he would tell us where there was a pile of dry ones, but he didn't want it known that he told us.

It is very different nowadays. Hardly anybody has a stove that you can burn wood in. Once in awhile you may find a combination wood and gas stove. They are putting out gas for cooking and electricity for baking. There will be more of them here in the Sandhills, but we are a long way from the electric power. We are out of power sometimes for as much as twenty-four hours, but not often.

We used to have to drive all stock to the railroad, some as far as forty miles. It would take two days and we had to night herd one night and sometimes two. Ranchers from the north would stop at my Father's place as it was only four miles to the railroad. He had a big kitchen and sometimes you could hardly get along for all the beds over the floor. Sometimes there would be two or more outfits shipping the same day, usually on Saturday from Whitman. In that way, the cattle would get to rest on Sunday and take on hay and water. Nowadays, trucks go to the ranches or the summer range and pick up the cattle. Most of the ranches have loading chutes close to the road. Some have scales so they can weigh the animals. Neighbors will drive to a rancher's scales to weigh their cattle.

The Sandhills of western Nebraska raise the best feeder cattle in the United States, Hereford and Angus. There are registered bulls in both breeds and several have quite a few registered cows. Some use \$10,000 to \$20,000 bulls. The calves are short-legged, with broad backs and heavy quarters. They are the kind that put on weight in a short time and they are what the feeders want. Some of them bring as high as \$65.00 a hundred

in Omaha as show calves. The 4-H Clubs train them and feed them until they weigh from 1000 to 1100 pounds. They bring as high as \$45.00 a hundred pounds to encourage more young folks to take part in the club work.

Ranchers often give calves to help advertise their cattle.

Chapter Eight

SADDLE STOCK

There is some fine saddle stock raised. Quarter horses seem to be the leading breed. Some raise Palaminoes or Appaloosies. Nearly all are pure-bred, some for show and some to be used for cow horses and roping horses. They get to be very good at the work. They begin to like it. With a good horse, at rodeos and at home, the rider doesn't touch the reins. He just sits and rides and sometimes loses his seat. The horse will put a cow in a pen even as another rider and horse are working against him. Those horses sell for high prices.

Chapter Nine

MORE ABOUT STORMS

I recall one spring in April. It was very nice that morning. It was in 1896, if I remember correctly, and about noon. It began with a fine rain and turned into snow. For three days and nights, we couldn't see 30 yards away. We had barbed wire fences out in front of the house about 50 yards. The only way we could get to the barn and the corral was to follow the fence. The windmill was south of the house by the fence so we could follow it when we were even with the house. We had a big stack of hay by the corral so that we could feed the cattle. They were in a high sod corral. We didn't lose any. I would go and fork hay over to them three or four times a day, but they had no water, but lots of snow! Some of our neighbors lost most of the cattle they had. The man by the name of Medearis, of whom I spoke of earlier, had 140 head and lost all but 20. They drifted into a lake a couple of miles south. The fence came down to the lake in the shape of an up-side-down V from the north. A lot of cattle drifted and kept crowding into the water. There wasn't over 3 feet of water but there was a lot of mud. They would walk over those that were

down and drown them. The lake was a half mile across and a man could walk across over the dead cattle.

Medearis was out of hay, so Dad traded him a stack of hay for a Texas cow. She was roanish in color. I saw her head west one morning, for the next spring, toward Center Lake. The rest of the cattle all followed her. A storm came that evening and it snowed for 3 days and nights. We couldn't find our cattle. Dad thought they went south. I went 12 miles south, looking all around. I told Dad I thought they went up to the lake. It was day. There were big canes, ten feet high. Our milk cows were gone also. One yearling only with a broken ankle stayed home. I went up to the lake and east up into the big hills so that I could see better. I saw the old roanish cow coming out of the cane breakers. I rode down and got them all out. They were fine. There was green grass there and two of the cows had had little calves. The milk cows were about to dry up. They had gone four days without being milked. It took quite awhile for them to get back into full production again. That old cow knew it was going to storm so she went into the cane break. It had never got so cold out in the wind but the wind couldn't get to the cattle. It was quite warm where they were. I wanted Dad to keep the old cow for we would have lost the two calves if she hadn't taken the cows to the cane break. But he had all Durham cattle and nice big ones, so he sold her the next fall with her calf.

I don't know of any Durham cattle in the country at present. They are either Hereford or Angus. There are a few Holsteins, Jerseys, and Brown Swiss for milking.

Chapter Ten

PRAIRIE FIRES

I remember one morning in the spring of the year 1892. We could see smoke in the west and north toward our neighbor Garton. The wind was blowing a gale. It always does when a fire gets started, especially in the daytime. Dad and all of us boys got in the wagon. We had old rags, a barrel of water, and spades. We were just ready to leave when Charlie Hoyt came. We took off and found out that Garton had set to burning some trash. A crazy act! It was very windy and he was afraid that the neighbors would be hard on him. So he went to bed and told his wife that he was sick. He was the laziest man I ever saw. They had three boys. One is my age.

Charlie went into the house. Garton said that he was sick. Charlie said, "You're a liar. You get up and help fight the fire or you will be a damn site worse than you are. We will drag you out!" Garton got up and helped.

Fires were hard to put out with no fire guards. We would plow eight or ten furrows, fifty yards or so apart, and burn between them but the fire would jump it sometimes or else the wind would carry a cow chip that was burning across.

One time a fire started close to Alliance, Nebraska, and went to Broken Bow, Nebraska. It jumped the Loup River. There was a strong wind. We kids were at school. It was not long after school had started. Dad came after us and all the boys in school went to help fight the fire. We spared a neighbor's house that was gone. A man that was staying there had the bedding out in the yard. He ripped the feather bed open and emptied it out. Dad made him take the things back into the house. Mrs. Burk and the family that owned the place were at home but she was so scared, she didn't know what to do. My Dad told her to stay in the house. It was made of sod and wouldn't burn. We started on and didn't get but about a quarter of a mile when the boy said, "I forgot the stallion in the barn and calves in the shed." Both had hay roofs. Dad told him to go get the horse and calves out. My brother had his saddle pony, so he let him take Jim and told him to drop the reins when he got to the corral.

The fire was over half a mile away. Alvin let the horse out just when the fire hit the shed. It burnt the calves.

We thought the fire had passed. You couldn't get near it. It set hay stacks afire three hundred yards ahead of the fire. The air was full of sparks and burning cow chips. It burnt jack-rabbits and caught quite a few grouse. It took some cattle and even blinded a buck deer.

The first fire went by on the south side of our valley. We had just got cleaned up for dinner when it began to get smokey. Dad and Emmett went to see if they could see it. They mounted a horse and were gone but a little while before they came back as fast as the horse could run. The fire was close, so we all went and fought it until almost dark. It would have gotten to our buildings and

hay by the corral but it had to come down the big hill, north of the house. So we had a chance to put it out. We had all our cattle east of the house. We were all played out. Our eyes hurt so that we kids and two of Medearis boys lay down on the floor. Mother had quite a time getting us awake to eat supper. We hadn't had any dinner.

The cattle never offered to leave. Of course, everything was burned by the fire. It was a good thing we had a lot of hay to feed them. Grass was starting to grow and we had grass in a few weeks.

I don't see how Dad and Mother kept us clothed and fed. Of course, things were cheaper then. Cows brought \$25.00 to \$28.00. My oldest son just told me he took a big milk cow to the sale in Valentine, the Cherry County seat. She weighed 1500 pounds and brought \$200.00.

The trains set a lot of fires when they burnt coal. All diesel engines are used in the prairie country now; in fact, pretty much all over. Many freight trains would set fire one after another and not all of them were put out off of the right-a-way. They would plow fire guards. Sometimes the sparks would fly a long way. The railroad company would pay the damage. Mostly range was burnt and sometimes the sparks burnt hay.

There weren't many people in the country then to fight fires and they had nothing to fight with. Once in awhile they would kill a beef and open it up so that we would drag it flat and put a throw rope to each hind foot and drag it with two saddle horses to put out side fires. After the head fire had passed on, the only thing you could do was to plow a furrow or two a half mile or more ahead and set a fire. In that way, the two fires would meet. Then the men would have to stay and see

that the cow and buffalo chips didn't get another start. If the wind should change, it would blow them in the grass and soon another fire would start. After the fire, the sand would blow, especially if it was dry. If we had a good rain, grass would soon start and that is where the cattle would go to grass. The grass would be so tender that the cattle would put on fat, but they would not be as healthy as they were when they fed on older grass and carry the same flesh.

Grass is a lot thicker on the ground now but not as tall as it was years ago.

Chapter Eleven

GROUSE, PRAIRIE CHICKENS, DUCKS, AND GEESE

In the 1880's there were many grouse, prairie chickens, and ducks. A few Canadian geese would sometimes nest on the lakes. I have seen a few young ones that were hatched out on Steven and Cottonwood Lakes, forty miles north of Whitman, Nebraska. There used to be grouse by the hundred, until a law was passed so they could be killed for market. The season opened on September 1st and closed on January 1st, but some of the hunters didn't stop then.

Some of the hunters would fix up a covered wagon and camp out for four or five days until they had six hundred to a thousand birds. Then they would take them to Hyannis and sell them. That was as long as they

would keep. Of course, they had to be drawn, that is, the entrails had to be taken out. At night, they would be spread out around the wagon on the ground to cool.

Elmer Louis at Hyannis bought the birds.

Silas Howard would camp out at the big hay meadows and do nothing but hunt quite a few. He got a good start by hunting birds. Howard took a claim west of Whitman. He proved and sold it to Arthur Abbott. It is the Abbott Cattle Co. of Hyannis now. They own banks all over. I think it is twelve banks they own and they own land all over—hundreds of thousands of acres. The last I heard was 400,000 acres. They run around 60,000 cattle. Getting back to the birds, there aren't many grouse or prairie chickens now. You could travel for a week and never see one. There used to be quite a few back, say, 60 years ago. You will see it printed in the papers and in *Outdoor Life Magazine*. They say that pin-tail grouse and prairie chickens are abundant in the sandhills. So people come from Omaha, Lincoln, and some from out of state to hunt. The law ought to be closed on both grouse and prairie chickens. A lot of the hunters don't get any when they come. Some are lucky, of course, but they don't stop at the limit. They will keep on shooting and just let the extra birds lay there.

Years ago there was a group that came on the train from Omaha and Lincoln. They had their boats and Negro cook. Also all kinds of whisky. They would stay a week at the lakes and shoot everything. They would bring their dogs. There was a group of them from Lincoln camped at Center Lake, 4 miles north of Whitman. It was a large lake then. It is a big hay meadow now, owned by the Monahan Cattle Co. My dad had a place a mile east of it. Dad told me to find a bunch of horses. He wanted to work some of them. I went around the lake, on the

west, and in the hills, south of the lake. I found a big pile of ducks and grouse. That just about put a stop to hunting. People wouldn't let them hunt on their land anymore.

You couldn't keep them off of a lake with over 40 acres of water, but you could keep them off the land and have them arrested for trespassing. There were over 2000 grouse, prairie chickens, and ducks in the pile. There were no game wardens in those days. Of course, the hunters put up a howl but it didn't do them much good. I don't say all hunters were that way. Some were considerate. Once in a while, they would cut the fence, not a hundred yards from where a gate stood just over the hill. The cattle would get out and get all mixed up with other cattle from a neighboring ranch. Sometimes we wouldn't know the cattle were out until we would miss some of them. Maybe it would be a week. They would be scattered all over. Sometimes it would be fall round-up before a little rancher would get all of his cattle back. He would miss one or two. Fall round up means taking cattle off the summer range to the ranches and winter range and hay.

We used to hear geese and Sandhill cranes going north in the spring. They would stop and rest at the lakes but most of them are dry now. There would be a lot going south in the fall but they don't stop anymore. Neither do the ducks. We got a few pheasants. There isn't enough grain and "Mr. Ring Neck" likes grain. Grass and sunflower seeds are about there are in the winter for them to eat. Some ranchers put out feed for them when the snow is deep.

The first summer on my claim, I didn't have a barn, so I fed my team out in front of the house. The grouse got so gentle, they would walk around in the yard like

tame chickens. I would lie on a pallet by the door at noon with both doors open and they would come and look at me, sometimes within two feet of me. I did not move. They would look awhile and then walk away. My youngest sister's husband came out and stayed a few days. He came running in and said, "Arlie, where is the gun? There are grouse in the yard." I said "George, you aren't going to bother those grouse. This is their home." He didn't like it because I wouldn't let him shoot at them.

Chapter Twelve

A WORD ABOUT OUR WEATHER, FALL 1961

It has been a nice fall. I had such a nice Thanksgiving day. Today is November 28, 1961. It is a beautiful day, clear and warm.

My son and wife just got back from one of our neighbor's. They are going to spray calves for grubs. They work out of a calves' back. They are a fly at first and sting the cattle in their heels. The cattle will run. If you want to do anything with the cattle during the season they are at work, you have to get it done early. The flies don't start until around 10:00 a.m. or at least until it gets warm. The cattle will scatter all over, trying to get rid of them. They run off many pounds.

Neighbor Wolfenden had lost nine cows. My boy had his hounds, so they drove out and caught one coyote. They saw three more but couldn't get a run on them. I sure like to see the dogs catch them. The first dog grabs

the coyote by a hind leg and throws it. Usually, the other dogs stay close behind. Sometimes a coyote will get up several times if it is big. Some of them weigh 45 to 50 pounds. They cut the dogs up pretty badly when they get hold of them. They use grey or stag hounds. Stag hounds are usually the best fighters and trackers. There isn't much difference in speed between the two varieties.

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I used to hunt quite a lot with hounds years ago. I rode a horse where they now build a rack on a pick-up or jeep and cover it. It has a door on each side with enough space left so the dogs can look out. Some will get at each side and stick their heads out front. As they observe, they bark to get out and the driver jerks the cord on his side; another person jerks the cord on his side. Both doors fall down and the dogs are out in a second. They often catch the coyote within a half mile. Sometimes quicker. Sometimes they will run it a mile or more. I think we will go coyote-hunting tomorrow. I hope we can get two or three. They kill little calves in the spring. They find a calf where a cow has left it when she has gone to water. Usually one or two cows stay with the calves as nurses. They will fight the coyotes off. They will bawl a few times and all the cows will come running. In fact, the whole herd, bulls and all. Then "Mr. Coyote" takes off. The calves will all get in close and other cattle will circle around them so that the coyotes can't get the calves. Sometimes a cow will go a half mile or more from the rest of the cattle to have her calf and she won't go back to it. But when she first sees you, she will look straight to where her calf is. I have ridden for over a quarter of a mile before I have found a calf. When it saw me, it would put its head flat on the ground, so as to hide. But you don't want to bother them. The cow will go to it. Once

in awhile, the cow will follow you if you have a dog along.

I remember the first calf I ever owned. My father had traded a mare to one of the neighbors for two big durham cows. He ran some Angus cattle. Dad told me that if I watched the cow and didn't let the calf freeze, I could have it, if it were a heifer. I was feeding hay one day and saw her go up in the hills north of the feed grounds. So I hurried and got the hay off the wagon. I put the team in the barn and went to get the cow. I could drive her anywhere on foot. She had her calf and it was up. The cow was licking it and giving it a little nudge once in awhile to keep it on its feet. It was a heifer. Did I ever make it to the house in record time! I was so tickled. Dad laughed when I ran in and told him she had had a heifer calf. I kept the calf until she was 13 years old. She had her first calf when she was two years old and one every spring after that. By the time I shipped her, I had a nice little bunch of cattle.

I bought my clothes and a good saddle. I rode bare-back until I got money of my own to buy a saddle. I got so that I could ride all day and help work cattle by just hanging on to the horse's mane.

My Dad was good to us kids. So was Mother. We kids got along well most of the time. My third brother was lazy and would make my older brother do all the work. Dad told us boys to put hay in the corral for the cattle. We had it stacked by the corral, so we got our pitch forks and went around the stack. Emmett sat down by the stack out of the wind and told us to feed the cattle. We told him he had to help. He said, "By gee, if you kids don't get busy, I will whip both of you." We told him he wasn't big enough. So, at it we went. We got him down and sat on him. He did a lot of bucking. He said, "When I get loose, I'll show you kids a few things."

Dad came around to see why we weren't feeding the cattle. He said, "What's going on here?" We told him that Emmett wouldn't help and had tried to whip us. Dad grinned and told us to let him up. He said, "Emmett, now young man, you get busy and feed the cattle." He got to work in a hurry. Dad hardly ever touched us kids but when he did whip us, we sure knew it. We always deserved it when we got spanked, too.

My oldest son, Arnold, and his wife and I went coyote hunting over some rough hills. That is where the coyotes stay for just a few jumps and then they are out of sight. They will lose the hounds quite often if they won't trail. We caught a big dog coyote. He sure was a fighter. We jumped two coyotes and the dogs split. One young dog took after the other one alone. She is a good fighter but one dog can't kill a coyote. She threw it a few times and then came to help the other dogs. It didn't get very far until the dogs had it. We saw four but only got one run. They were very wild.

The man on whose place we hunted keeps three men. They all have high powered rifles, and if they see a coyote, they try to shoot it. We saw one close to a half mile away. It was running in such big hills that we didn't have a chance to get a run.

There were two hundred coyotes caught last winter. A man in a plane would spot them. He had a short wave radio to the cars. He would say which way to go. There would be three or four cars and we would close in from all sides. He would tell us when to let the dogs out. Sometimes it would be just under the hill, but we couldn't see it. The dogs would get close to it and then it would give them a long run. Some of the coyotes are very fast. Sometimes they out run and wind the dogs. I like to see the dogs catch them. One coyote hardly ever

will attack a calf alone. Sometimes they will cut a calf around the nose and it will bawl. They almost always stick their tongues out and the coyotes will cut them. Their teeth are so sharp that they hardly ever hold on. They just slash and cut. We had some we had to take in and feed. They couldn't nurse so we would bring the cow in and milk her. Then pour the milk down the calf and put medicine on its tongue to help heal it. Then it could feed itself. Sometimes it would be a week before it could suck the cow.

Ranching is not all peaches and cream as some people think. The colder and stormier the weather, the more the rancher has to be with his stock and feed them. He must also break the ice so that the cattle can drink. If you can let them drink, they will stand a lot more cold. Ranchers are now building many big sheds to put cows in when they begin calving. Also single stalls are used. Some have as many as 20 stalls or more with enough room in the alleys between for many more. They put the cows in a stall that they expect to calve that night. And if a cow needs help, you put her where you can get at her. A lot of them have to be helped. You have to get up nights and inspect them. Some ranchers hire a man just to look at them during the night. He has a stove and everything in the bunkhouse so that he can get a midnight lunch and make some black hot coffee. He goes out to the shed every two hours and sometimes he has to have help. Then he calls the boss or some of the men to help. Most of the calves come in March or April. Some of the ranchers who have many cows will get from thirty to forty calves in twenty-four hours. It depends on how many cows they have. Some of them get as many as 2,000 calves.

Chapter Thirteen

ABOUT OUR FISHING YEARS AGO

We used to have a lot of fish. Mostly bullheads and carp. I don't know how they first got in the big lakes unless the pelicans carried them in their pouches or breasts. A pelican's pouch will hold two to three quarts of water and several fish, from four to six inches long. Once when I was about fifteen, I was out riding after cattle with my shot gun. I saw a flock of white birds on a pond. I left my horse. He would never try to leave me. I dropped the reins and crawled on my stomach until I got close enough to get one. I was sure they were grees. But I found out they were pelicans. When I picked one up by the feet, water and fish spilled out into the pond. The pelican isn't any good for anything that I know of. Some say they cross the ocean. They could carry their lunch along and alight on the water to rest.

About forty years ago, three of us couples went up to Peister Lake. My nephew, Harry Hort, and his wife, my niece, Mrs. Harry Akin, and my wife and myself. We camped close to a chockecherry patch. It was dusk and we were getting a place for our beds when a rattlesnake began to rattle. The only thing we had to find him with was a flashlight. Harry Hoyt killed it for us.

We caught a lot of fish the next day. I took part of a gunny sackful and dumped them into my neighbor Dad Churches' lake and told the rest not to tell anybody. Three years later, I said to my wife, "Let's go over to the Churches' to fish. She couldn't go, so I went and found Dad at home. I said, "Dad, let's go fishing. He replied, "There are only little things by the well in the pond." I said, "Have you got your pole and line? If not, I have an extra one." He said, "What are you trying to do, make me think there are big fish?" I told him that I had put in half of a gunny sackful almost three years before. He got excited and said, "What are we waiting for? Let's go fishing!"

The lake was just a little way from the house. We caught a nice mess in a little while. Dad said, "I must call my wife and Rena, my daughter-in-law, to see the fish." Were they surprized! I took a nice mess home with me. He told other people and there were cars there almost every day. There were as many as 10 to 20 cars there on Sundays. Six years later the lake went dry. We had a long dry spell and Dad got the state to come and seine it. They took three carloads of fish out and brought them to Carter Lake near Omaha, Nebraska. They were all bullheads.

I prefer the bullheads. They are the best fish we have, I think. We also have bass, crappie, bull gill and some trout. The trout that one catches in the mountains of Colorado are good where the water is clear and cold, but I still prefer the bullhead.

Flounder is a good fish. I used to order them, along with oysters, from Houston, Texas, when I ran a restaurant in Hallettsville, Texas. One would make two nice thick slices that would cover a dinner plate. And such large oysters! Were they good, fried! I caught trout in

Flyn Flawn, Manitoba, Canada. They were good. It was in May and the ice had not been gone long. The lake was 200 feet deep in places. My youngest boy and I went. We had a good time. Twenty-four hundred miles, round trip.

I have traveled quite a lot, but it makes me tired now if I go a long way.

Chapter Fourteen

OLD-TIMERS

I went to one of our old-timers' cattle and machinery sales on the 7th of December 1961. Bill Marshall had black Angus cattle, 200 cows and a bunch of 2 year-old heifers and yearlings. The cows went as high as \$240.00 per head. A good price. Bill was a bachelor. I met several old-timers in the country. A Mrs. Smith from Rushville, Nebraska. Her Dad came here in 1884 and the family followed in 1888. She is 79 years old and quite spry for her age.

I saw the Yanneys whose folks had come to the sand-hills. Charley Yanney came here from Cambridge in 1888 with Ed Myers. I never knew the senior Yanney but was well acquainted with his son Floyd. I knew him and his wife before they were married. She was one of the A. J. Vaughn girls. She was full of fun. We used to meet at dances years ago and would dance all night at some of the neighbors. We'd go home after sun-up, tired but happy. It was one big family. All for fun. Everyone took

eats and would make a big boilerful of coffee. I used to call for dances until I was hoarse. Everybody had a good time.

Gladys, Mrs. Yanney, and her sister came to Charlie Hoyts' one night with a four-horse freight wagon from Whitman. They were so cold, they could hardly walk and still Gladys wanted to help put the teams in the barn. I told her that if she didn't go in the house, I would carry her in. She went in and was still shaking from the cold when I came in. She said, "Arlie, I was colder than I thought." The weather was below zero.

Her husband, Floyd, had his right hand cut off in an alfalfa grinder several years ago but works all the time on their ranch. I recall one morning when I was going by. I stopped. Floyd was trying to get a small calf in the corral with a horse. Gladys got mad and cried, "Damn you, get off!" She got on the horse and roped the calf. She then reached down and got the calf on the horse and brought it to the corral. She said to Floyd, "Now, you see if you can put it in the corral." Floyd laughed.

Fred Marshall, a brother to Bill, came to Cherry County in 1902 and settled 35 miles north of Whitman. Afterwards, he and Bill Curtis bought land known as the George Lachey place and the Runner place. Fred sold his share years later to the Pullman Cattle Company, and bought land quite a few miles east. Still he kept what he had settled at first farther north. Fred is well off. He owns a lot of cattle and land. He is a good neighbor and is liked by all. Bill was also a good neighbor and well-liked.

I used to give dances before I married, and we gave several after I was married. One of our closest neighbors, Ace Rhoden, brought half a bushel of navy beans and when he passed them around, everybody laughed. Every-

one took some beans. They were all eating. The beans were seasoned with ham and were very good.

I gave a dance and oyster supper at my wedding. We made a wash-boilerful of oysters and a boiler full of coffee. Those were the good old days.

Chapter Fifteen

MORE ABOUT THE WRIGHTS

All of us kids came with Dad to the hills except my second sister, Jennie, who was married and who lived in Colfax, Iowa. Her husband was a plasterer and a good one. They came out on a visit and stayed. They ran a restaurant in Whitman. Her husband's name was Frank Loysdon. They had one son. There wasn't much plastering to be done around. Frank plastered Alex Burr's house at the Pullman. Frank would go to other towns to do plaster work. My brother, D. B. Wright, and his wife came on a visit from Grand Junction and Frank moved back with them. He did well. He built three houses. They were left to his boy. Jennie died before he did.

The boy disposed of all the houses. He took to drinking and sold first one and then the other houses. He had a good education. He took a job as bookkeeper for the state and worked there until he died, which was several years later.

My brother didn't stay in the sandhills long. Nine years or so. He went to Mason City, Nebraska, and bought land there. He and his wife moved into Mason City three

years before he died. His wife outlived him by three years. The three oldest girls live in Mason City and so does the next oldest boy also. Two of the girls live in Iowa.

My third sister. Rachel Capenhaver, lives near Aline, Oklahoma. They went there when the Cherokee Indian strip opened. She lives on the old home place. She was 93 years old last September 1st. I am going to pay her a visit soon. I usually go every winter and stay a couple of months. I do the cooking for her and we have a nice visit. I am a good cook. I will prepare a meal and tell Rachel to come and eat. She has a good appetite. She says, "I just sit around while you do the work. And I eat like a harvest hand." I told her I was going to make a carrot pie. She told me she didn't like carrots. Why bother? But she ate two big pieces. You can't tell a carrot pie from a pumpkin pie except that the latter is richer. Lots of folks can't tell the difference.

Rachel had two boys and a girl. Her husband and both boys have passed on. The wife of one son lives almost in the same yard.

My third brother, S. G. Wright, lived on a ranch, 18 miles north of Whitman until his children were old enough to go to school. He raised two boys and a girl. He bought the lumber yard in Whitman and made good. He had it for 27 years. He had an expensive family. His wife and boys spent all they could get. Sherman passed on in 1949. The oldest boy, Claude, passed on also. Too much bottle! Clarence, the youngest boy, lives near Lincoln. Grace, the daughter, is married to Johnnie Buchfink. They live on a ranch southwest of Whitman, about 7 miles.

I went up to Sherman's with my hounds and we went coyote hunting. Grace wanted to go. She had a nice little

horse I had ridden for years. We got ready and had gone about a mile and a half when we jumped a coyote. Away we went after the dogs. Sherman said, "Hang on, daughter." She was five years old and little, but she hung onto the saddlehorn. My old stag hound threw the coyote in a little bit. Sherman came up to us and laughed. When we went back to the house, Grace said, "Mom, I outran Dad on Barney, but I couldn't keep up with Uncle Arlie."

The next morning Sherman said, "I got some calves I want to wean from the cows. We will drive them east of the corral where it is dry and it won't be slick." He had a good horse but not quick enough for the calves. We had the corral gate open but every calf he tried out, dodged him. He said, "Arlie, how is Fleet?" I said, "He suits me fine." He was as good or better than many of their cutting horses. I never used spurs or a quirt. I worked 20 calves and not a one got away. Fleet never got excited. When we went into the house, he told his wife, Lila, "I thought old Jim was a cow horse but Fleet sure has him beat. He can turn all around Jim."

E. W. Wright married and lived on a place five miles north of Whitman. They had all girls. Two live in Oregon and the rest in Nebraska. He passed away in Mitchell, Nebraska. His wife and second daughter still live in Mitchell.

D. B. Wright, who is a little older than I, lives in Santa Monica, California. He had three children. Two girls and a boy. The boy passed away when he was a little over a year old. They lived in Grand Junction, Colorado, for several years. He was in the real estate business and was in California for quite a while. His wife passed on several years ago. She was a fine little lady.

My youngest sister Essie, two years younger than I, married a man by the name of George Shepardson. They

raised seven children, five boys and two girls. They lived in Woodriver, Nebraska, for awhile and then moved to Grand Junction. They both are buried there. Two boys and the oldest girl live in Grand Junction. The other girl lives in Sacramento, California. One lives in Milkauwie, Oregon, and one in Paradox, Colorado, near the Utah line. Sis raised a nice family.

I was a little redhead and didn't grow much for a long time. I weighed two pounds when I was born. Mother said the only way she could tell if I were crying, was for her to bend down with her ear close to my face. I never got to weigh over 156 pounds. I was sick a lot until I started school. I was healthy after that. I liked to handle stock and I could ride when I was seven years old. We got our first chance to ride then. My oldest brother had a little Indian pony. He brought it from Missouri with us and I rode her a lot and drove the cattle. She only weighed seven hundred pounds but she sure could run. I rode bareback with a bridle only. I would let the pony graze along. I would be far behind the other boys when we were riding and they would try to run away from me. I would say, "Come, bird, let's go," and she would pass them in no time. I loved that little mare. My brother took her to Mason City with him. My brother-in-law, Copenhaver, liked to race horses, so he trained her. She beat everything in the county. A man came from Chicago and bought her and trained her to run without a rider. My brother-in-law had her so that she would run without anybody riding her. He would lead her around the track and then leave the head stall with her bridle on and slap her on the hips. He would put her against a man. From 20 steps to a quarter of a mile, she would jockey two or three times, then would get mad and kick a horse or man, but never would hurt

anybody. Tom would tell them that they had better go or she would kick them.

When I worked out at riding jobs, I always was alone and batched. I broke some of the horses to ride. I got so that I could break them easily. You had to learn to ride or walk in off the range. My oldest brother got sick and I had to go over every day in the morning and evening and help his wife with the chores. It was a good four miles. He had a big brown horse that would buck him. He would pull all the leather he could get hold of. I told him, I was going to ride it. He said, "He will throw you, kid." I laughed. I was sixteen then and wasn't afraid of a horse. Dad and I went over and caught the horse and saddled him. We led him a little way from the barn and my sister-in-law and all the children came to see me get thrown. How they laughed! The horse certainly did buck. I whipped him at every jump. Dad went to the house and John asked if I had been thrown. Dad told him that I whipepd him at every jump. He never tried to buck me after that.

I was married to Lola E. Clark, on May 10th, 1910. There were four children born. One daughter lives in Marysville, California. She has a girl and a boy. She is a registered nurse and worked for several years in a doctor's office. She works once in awhile now. Her husband got a good job with the state. He drew the blueprint for the large dam above Oraville, California. A big cement piling, 400 feet high. It will dam the river that runs close to Marysville. It is a railroad bridge. Water will be within 30 feet of the bridge. It will be the largest earth dam in the U.S.A., and, I think, in the world.

My two oldest boys get their mail at Mullen, Nebraska. The oldest one, Arnold, lives on a ranch, 40 miles north of Mullen. He has a nice ranch. He is wintering 800

head of cows and calves. He is also keeping 100 cows on shares. They work hard. They have three children—two girls and a boy. The oldest girl was graduated at Curtis, is married and has a baby girl. She is my first great-grandchild. She is a spry little thing. She took her first step at five months. She fell and wouldn't try anymore. The other girl will graduate this spring from Curtis, Nebraska. The boy is a freshman in the high school at Mullen.

My second son, Tilbert, lives on the Loup River, 2 miles north of Mullen. He is in partnership with my niece, Maude Henderson. It is her place and he does the work. He looks after the cattle and puts up the hay. They split the calf crop. He has four children—three girls and a boy. The oldest is married and was graduated from Mullen. The next girl is in the eleventh grade and the youngest in the seventh grade. The boy hasn't started school as yet.

Tilbert and his wife are both hard workers. Marjorie and I raise a good garden every year. That's all I do. We had bushels of tomatoes, bananna squash, 30 inches long, that weighed 15 pounds. I never saw such vines. The little boy, three years old, got part way out in the vines and you couldn't see him. The vines ran 22 steps long. Some of them got to the sweet corn. The vine was 7 feet high. It ran up to the end of the corn and would go 3 to 4 feet above and break the stalks.

My youngest son, Marvin, lives in Grand Island. He has two big trucks. He does a lot of grain hauling. He used to haul cars from Detroit, Michigan, to the west coast. He traded those trucks and got two large transports. He would haul meat from Omaha to the coast and bring back garden produce. He would haul 35 tons at a load. He was run into. A car hit his truck in the rear.

He had to have an operation on his back as a result. Now he can hardly lift any weight. Marvin is a large man; he weighs 190 pounds.

He has two boys and a girl. The oldest boy is in the 6th grade; the next is in the 3rd grade and the little girl will start school next fall.

Marvin drove his truck 150,000 miles one year, hauling cars. A lot of driving.

About The Kings

The Kings came to the Sandhills in 1890 and hunted grouse and shipped them to Omaha. King hunted on the Snake River. He filed a claim in 1905 and started the King Post Office. His brother ran the store at Steven Lake. Another brother, Fred, came out and settled in 1905. He farmed and raised cattle. He also bought and sold junk. In 1932, he sold his place to his nephew, O. J. King, and moved to Ashby, Nebraska. They had originally come from Kansas.

There were a couple of grey wolves in the country. They would come down out of Wyoming in the winter. They had been seen several times but no one could get a shot at them. One morning, Charlie King said to his wife, "I'm going out and kill me a wolf." Joking, he took his big rifle and went walking around in the brush. Looking around, he saw one of the wolves lying on a hillside in the sun. He shot it and killed another one also. He had seen but one, but the other one was lying right behind the first one. He killed them both.

O. J. King moved to Alliance in 1950. His son Keith runs the ranch. They have Angus cattle. Marjorie, the youngest girl, is married to my son Tilbert. Tilbert had a surprise birthday party for his wife last night. It was

her 43rd birthday. He took her to Alliance with him after a load of grain. The guests were all waiting for them when they got home. Everyone had a nice time. Thirty people played cards and had lunch.

About The Yaryans

Granddad Yaryan came to Cherry County in 1887 and settled on what is known as the Coble Ranch. He lived there several years. He and his wife raised three children, two boys and a girl. Andrew, the oldest son, married Laura Bell. They had two boys, Merle and Earl. Merle lives in Mullen with his mother. Earl lives on his ranch, 30 miles north of Mullen. Both are big men. The Yaryans were all quite large.

Stella Yaryan, the sister of Andrew and John, married Jack Hawley. They sold their place and moved into Whitman when their children were old enough for school. They built a hotel south of the railroad track and ran it for about five years. From there, they moved to Montana.

John, the youngest son, moved to Iowa, after his folks sold out. I think the folks went there also.

Ike Palmer came to Whitman in 1889. He ran a livery barn in Whitman. Ike married Clara Whitehead. one of my school chums. We went together for a year. They lived in a little house in Whitman. She died young. They were only married a couple of years.

About The Roseberrys

John Roseberry came to Cherry County in 1892. He came here from the Dismal River and built a big ranch, 30 miles northwest of Mullen. He was the first man to set out an apple orchard. His wife remained on the ranch

after he died. The boys ran it for several years. Tom, the oldest boy, ran it and the others helped to do the work. After the mother died, it was sold. Some of the boys tried to buy out the rest of the heirs but none of them could agree. It was a large family of boys and girls. They had a lot of fine Hereford cattle. The ranch and all brought over a million, so I hear. John, the father, built a store in Mullen in 1910. He built a block house in Mullen and Mrs. Roseberry lived in town during the school year.

Tom is foreman at the Pullman Cattle Company. He bought a ranch for one of his boys. Tom, Jr., runs it for him.

Tim Falby

Tim Falby was an old Irish sailor. He stayed with the Jack Hawleys and the Yaryans. He liked to hunt and was well-liked by everyone. Tim and Romey Hones once went fishing. Romey said something that Tim didn't like. Hones wasn't well liked. Tim tipped the boat. Romey couldn't swim very well. He got hold of the boat but Tim swam around on his back and kicked the boat, and then shouted, "Now, darn ye, swim to shore."

The Cox Family

A. B. Cox came here from Virginia and filed a claim on the south side of what was the Barney Riley Ranch. Ek, as almost everybody called him, and Mr. Lowe of Mullet bought Riley out. Cox bought Lowe out afterwards. After several years, when his boys, Don and Henry, grew up, he sold to them and moved to Mullen. He had one girl. His wife has lived in Mullen ever since he was killed in a car accident in 1959.

Don, the oldest boy, still lives on his share of the ranch. Henry moved to Mullen and leases his place.

Aleck Cox became wealthy. He was a trader and would often take big risks but he always won out.

He bought land on the Loup River, east of Mullen, and ran some cattle there. He bought the land from the Chris Abbot Cattle Company.

Elmus Henderson

Elmus Henderson came to the sandhills in 1909 and filed his claim on Kinkaid. He went back to Kearney and came out in 1910 in a covered wagon, and a horse hitched to a buggy. He married my niece. He is still going strong and looks after the ranch.

Frank Benish moved in, south of Elmus. A bachelor, he has leased Elmus his section for years. He came here in 1912. He has a few apple trees. He drove a horse and a cow. He used to trap muskrats and coyotes and work out in the haying season. He was 87 or 88 years old last fall.

Chapter Sixteen

GREY WOLVES

Clarence Smith was an old-timer. He had a place 6 miles north of Whitman and another ranch 25 miles north. He called it Buffalo Lake. The one next to town was Valley and Center.

The wolves came out of Wyoming in the winter and began to kill his young horses. The wolves like horse meat better than beef. Smith was riding after his cattle and saw a wolf. He ran him quite a while. The wolf ran in a big circle. Sometimes he was close to the ranch and then again he was quite a way off. Smith thought he could play it out by cutting across. He finally gave up and went to the ranch. In the night, the dogs woke him up by hitting against the door. He had a little window pane in the door and saw the wolf out in the yard. As it started off, he slipped the glass out and hissed at the dogs. They ran after the wolf but it chased them right back to the door. Smith shot it with a shot gun loaded with buck shot.

A couple of his neighbors on horseback chased a wolf and roped it. Van Pratt roped it and John Carpenter helped to run it down. It had had a big feed and played itself out easily, so they caught it. Bert Pratt, a brother to Van, and Bill O'Tolle saw a cow chasing a wolf to keep it from getting her calf. Bert told Bill to go around east and drive it toward a large draw and the big hills.

It ran close to where Bert was hidden. He was a good shot and killed it with a big rifle. The ranchers made up a purse. I don't remember the exact amount but it was close to \$100.00 each.

Charlie Hoyt

As well as I can find out, Charlie Hoyt and Bill Hannon were here in 1872. Charlie was 16 years old when he rode the Chisholm Trail and helped drive cattle from Texas to Wyoming. It took six or seven months to make the drive. Each man would have fifteen or twenty horses to ride. They had to night herd every night and those old long-horned cattle were hard to hold sometimes. In a storm. they would stampede and run for miles. All that the boys could do was to ride along the side and try to get the cattle to circle. In that way, they could stop them. They would shoot their revolvers and get the cattle to circle.

Charlie told me that they had been without meat for two days. The boss wouldn't kill a beef, so when a ground squirrel ran by, Charlie tried to rope it. It ran into a hole. He told the rest of the boys, "No meat for supper." They kept saying, "No meat for supper." The boss finally decided to stop the herd early and told the men to rope a yearling and butcher it. They had a man-cook who drove the wagon. The wagon had a canvas top so that it wouldn't leak. He would let the back-end of the high bed down for a work table and would do his cooking over a cow chip and buffalo dugout. The cook would go to town when they were short of grub and stock up with enough groceries to last until they passed close to another town.

Alvin Evans

Alvin Evans came to Hitchcock County from Illinois in 1893 in a covered wagon. He married Lizzie Seders in 1901 and bought the Jim Fimple place in 1908. They raised three boys and two girls. Alvin died several years ago and left a big debt against the place. His wife took over and the boys helped. Emerson is still running the ranch. His mother, too, is still active. The other boy, Darwin, lives near Johnstown. His mother owns his place also. He quit the ranch and went broke. His mother tried to get him to stay on the ranch but he wouldn't. Mrs. Evans had paid off the debts on the ranch and has a nice large ranch, five miles north of Whitman.

The Taylor Family

Jay Taylor came to the hills in Grant County in 1883 from Taylor, Nebraska. The town was named after Jay's father. There were three boys, Jay, Lew and Ed. Jay had five girls and three boys. Two of the boys are on properties that their Dad bought. Felix, the oldest, lives in Whitman, and his grandson is on the ranch nine miles northeast of town. Bill, the next boy, lives six miles southeast of Mullen, Nebraska. The other children are in California somewhere.

Jay Taylor was killed on the RR crossing at Whitman during World War II. Harry Hoyt and I were just over the hill, north of town, and the train was whistling like crazy. I told Harry that there must be something on the track. It was a troop train that hit him. His son-in-law was riding with him also. His son-in-law was able to jump but since he was crippled, Jay couldn't.

The Cole Family

Jason Cole, Sr., Jay and Ray's father, came to Cherry County from Hastings on September 5, 1888, and went by train to Broken Bow. There he hired a light spring buggy and drove to Chadron. With some food, a slicker apiece, some blankets and a tarpaulin, he and his father left Chadron in search of a place to raise Angus cattle. They had summered their cattle in Kansas and they were short of water there.

Mr. Cole filed on a homestead tree claim and a pre-emption with 160 acres each, in the first valley, north of Steven Lake. He then returned to Hastings for his belongings. They left from Hastings in two covered wagons with 8 head of work horses, 2 saddle horses, and 46 head of Angus cattle. Jason wasn't married yet.

They pitched their tent on June 1, 1888, and stayed at Charlie Hoyt's on June 2nd. They then stayed with the Nelsons. That must have been Ronnie Nelson's folks. He helped us to hay one year.

Jay Cole, Jr., was born on the place on February 24, 1890. A blizzard was raging outdoors. He was born in a sod house with one room and a dirt floor.

In the spring of 1894, Jason Cole received an unsigned threatening letter to move on. If he didn't move on, he could expect serious consequences. Sixty days later he received another unsigned letter saying there wasn't any vacant land and that if he didn't move on, he would be killed. "No room for homesteaders."

On August 14, 1894, just five days from Hastings and his mother's funeral, he was shot at close range while moving hay, within 50 yards of where they had pitched their tent in June 1889. The murderer was never caught. There were only a few people in the country then.

The boys were small and Mrs. Cole hired a man by the name of Harry Downing to work and help keep the ranch going. They were later married and had three children, two boys and a girl. The oldest boy, George, died in 1945.

Mrs. Downing left each of her four boys a nice ranch. She and my sister, Mrs. Hoyt, were good friends. Also Charlie and Jason Cole. My sister Josie had a sewing machine and so did our mother. They were the only sewing machines in the country. Mrs. Cole used to come and sew baby clothes before Jay was born.

The Coles still run Angus cattle. Jay owns a large ranch near Merriman, Nebraska. Ray, the other son, died quite a few years ago. His youngest son, Bob, is living on his father's place, the place his Dad inherited from his mother. Jay had one girl who lives on Jay's old place.

Wes Schakelford and Family

The Schakelford family came to Cherry County in 1908 and filed on a dry section, 25 miles northwest of Whitman. They had four girls and two boys. Mr. Schakelford ran the Shores Extracts for perfume and baking, etc. He had it for a long time. He finally sold his place and leased the Henry Christie place just north of the Loup River in the Dumbel Range. He lived on it until Christie sold it. He then moved to young Charlie's place. His daughter, Agnes, ran the King Post Office. He lived there two or three years and then moved to the Berrickman place, 25 miles north of Mullen. He was there about three years and then rented the Bill Ground's place, 18 miles north of Whitman. That was their home until Grounds sold to Elmus Henderson. They then moved on the Smokey place, 20 miles south of Bingham, Nebraska. He

was the school janitor until he became ill. He died in the hospital at Alliance. His wife outlived him.

Their oldest girl died several years before they did. One girl is in Oregon; one is south of Alliance and one is a bookkeeper for the Chevrolet Co. in Mullen. The oldest boy was with the forest rangers in Wyoming, the last I knew; the other lives in Alliance.

I thought a lot of Wes and his family. They were fine neighbors. I used to visit their house frequently and helped Mrs. Schakelford make mince meat. She would come down and help me. My two oldest boys and I batched. I was a good hand at making jelly and I was a good cook. I was glad to have my friends come to visit us.

Agnes is crippled from infantile paralysis and can't walk. My son Tilbert took her and Mrs. Abbott down on the Middle Prong one summer for some cedar trees to set out at Mom Abbott's. We were in a little open car, and Agnes said, "I wish it would rain." I told her that she might get her wish. It was very hot. We went far down to Dry Prong to get the trees. We took our dinner along. About 3 o'clock, it began to rain and hail. We were soaked when we got home. I carried Agnes into the house and asked her how she felt. She said, "I feel just like I did in my younger days."

Mom Abbott was a friend to a lot of folks. She was well-liked and was a good nurse. I recall her telling me that one night she came home from giving Dad Walker his shots before going to bed. She ran a restaurant in Whitman and heard someone talking out in front. There was moonlight outside. She looked around the corner and saw a Negro sitting there. He had a big chunk of bologna and was awfully drunk. He would take a bite and tell his dog to take a bite. We had quite a laugh out of it.

Gus Buchfinck

Another old-timer, Gus Buchfinck, came here in 1886. He worked for the CB&Q Railroad for six years. Then he quit and came to Grant County. He bought 7 miles, southwest of Whitman. He built a sod house and lived there several years. He later moved back to Grand Island so that his children could get a better education. Henry Lamb ran the ranch and batched until John, one of his boys, grew up and took over. John married a niece of mine and they still live on the place. They have a nice frame house on the same spot where the soddie stood. He bought out the rest of the heirs. He runs 1000 to 1400 head of cattle. He has fine buildings and keeps them freshly painted. They had three children, two boys and a girl. One boy died young. The oldest boy bought land from his Dad which lies south of Mullen. He used to use it for summer range. It was around 18 miles to drive cattle to and it took all day to get there. They had to start out before daylight so that they could get quite a way before it got too hot. He stacks a lot of hay, and bunches a great deal of upland hay high in the hills. He gets the biggest share of his calves in the fall and sells them the next fall.

Their daughter married one of the old-timer's grandson's, John Gentry. They had two boys. One died young. They live on a ranch just east of Whitman. Gentry came to the sandhills in 1886. As well as I can find out, he married Dad Abbott's daughter. She was married to Jim Monahan, Sr. They had two children, Jim and Alice. Jim Monahan married Cora McCrawley, Judge McCrawley's daughter, of Hyannis. They had one son, Earl. Jim was head of the Monahan Cattle Company until he retired. Then Earl took over. Jim lived to be 87 years old. He was

a fine neighbor. He always spoke whenever I met him just as he had before he got to be a millionaire. They have many fine buildings on the main ranch. Earl's son, young Jim, is foreman of the ranch now. They own land from six miles north and west of Whitman to within about 2 miles of Mullen. Also 25 miles east of Whitman. It all joins up north of the CB&Q Railroad, and there is a lot of land on the south side.

Mrs. Monahan was a nice woman. I used to have dinner with them sometimes after the fall round-up. We had some of our cattle with theirs. Arthur Abbott, Gentry, and James Monahan used to run their cattle together and round them up late in the fall, north of Monahan's. Abbott had more cattle than either of the others, so they held his and would cut Gentry's out on the west side and Monahan's on the east. I had Fleet to help them with. Gentry used a little brown horse called Jack. He was a good horse. Clyde Thurston was cutting out on Jack but got to working him too fast and broke his right front ankle. He sure hated it. The horse was getting old and never did get over it.

Jim Monahan, as a boy, had a horse he called Shuffler. He was pretty good but very rough to ride. He was well named.

The Metzgers

The Metzgers were here in the hills in the early days. My Dad helped them to hay in 1892 or 1893. They mowed, and bunched a lot, that is, raking the hay and bunching it with a two-horse rake. Dad said there were six of them who would start to work around 7 o'clock. They were east of the house and would get back for dinner and get around the land only once. They would

stop and oil the machine once in a while. One of their boys still runs the ranch. There were two or three older ones. Two remained on the ranch; one was studying to be a lawyer. They would drive their cattle to Whitman for shipment in the fall. It was a two-day drive. They sometimes stayed with Dad overnight. He never turned anyone away. In the west a person is welcome to a meal or to stay all night. It used to be that way in the early days. No one ever locked his house. It is still that way in the country. It is different in the farming country.

I helped Dad's closest neighbor drive a herd of horses to Rushcenter, Kansas, in 1905. We had 68 head and went by Broken Bow. Fimple would sell or trade all along the road. We were headed for Kingfisher, Oklahoma. It isn't too far from Oklahoma City. The horses developed distemper, so he shipped from Rushcenter, Kansas. We had quite a time getting something to eat and a place to stay at night. Some of the farmers would let you have a meal at any price. We always paid what they asked when we could stop.

We were passing a farmer's house in the middle of the morning; he had a large water tank. It was running over, so we asked to water our horses. He wasn't going to allow us to do so. He thought the horses would drink it all. We told him they wouldn't drink half of it, so he let us water. He wouldn't take any money for the water and was very pleasant. He had never seen so many horses. When we happened to strike people who traveled any, they were altogether different.

Fimple went on with his horses to Kingfisher and I went to my sister who lives at Aline, Oklahoma.

I never saw so many jack rabbits in all of my life as when we got to Kansas. It was all wheat land. There was only a strip of grass on each side of the road. The

horses would scatter all over and jump at the rabbits. They made trails across the wheat like the trails a cow makes going to water. I think there were 75 rabbits in sight at one time.

I met Jim at Woodward, Oklahoma, on our way home. He shipped back a couple of cars of yearling heifers and steers to Whitman. He hadn't sold his ranch yet. He had a brother younger than he who lived at Kingfisher. Jim sold out afterwards and moved to Kingfisher. It was a poor move, I understand. He went broke and his wife died. Jim was no farmer; he just couldn't make a go of it.

Steve Ham

Steve Ham, another old settler who came to live here in 1883, was up on the Thorpe place, northwest of Whitman. Abbott Cattle Company owns it now. They raised 5 children, 2 boys and 3 girls. Steve leased the John Burk place in South Prong, on the south side of the valley. It was about 2 miles from the west end of the valley. We kids went to school together in South Prong. We went three or four terms together.

The oldest boy, Perry, lived in Mullen, and, Maude, the oldest girl does also. Veda, the second girl, is in Denver, and Lillie, the youngest, lives in Broken Bow. The second boy, Orval has been dead several years.

Steve moved to El Campo, Texas and both older girls married while they were there. Maude married Bill Schooler and Veda married a man by the name of Frankie. They all moved back here. Steve bought a place southwest of Mullen and lived on it quite a while. It was south of Hecla. He bought several cows in Texas and

brought them back with him. He sold out and moved to Mullen. I bought some of his cows at his sale. He built the Ham Rooming House. Maude ran it for several years after her father died. Veda's husband, Frankie, organized the Frankie Construction Company. Maude had one boy. Frankie didn't have any children. Maude owned the Evergreen Hotel in Mullen. I sold Steve Ham my cattle. He bought my Dad's cattle on time and sold me cattle on time when I bought from him.

Steve was one of the first County Commissioners in Hooker County. The Board consisted of Steve, W. M. Proctor, and E. M. Grant. The meeting was held from June 11 to June 17, 1889. During this meeting, they laid out the political divisions or precincts and set up the necessary books for assessing and collecting taxes. They called for a special meeting to raise \$1,500.00 to build a court house. They met on November 16, 1889, and built one.

In 1916, a new one-story modern brick building, with a full basement, was built. The old building was then sold to W. R. Boyer and used as a residence. It was moved across the street where it now stands. In 1900, a bridge was built across the Middle Loup River, and, in 1902, a bridge was built across the Dismal River. There wasn't much settlement until 1904 when the Kinkaid Act was passed, allowing a claim of 640 acres.

The Garretts

James H. Garrett came to Mullen in 1888. He was county superintendant for years in Hooker county.

I don't know how many children he had. I know of 3 boys and 1 girl. Floyd Garrett has run the Post Office

in Whitman for over 35 years. He worked for Vestus Corothers, just south of Whitman, for quite a few years. He also lived on Roy Garrett's place for 6 years.

Webster Bowers

Webster Bowers was another old-timer. He came to the sandhills in 1884 and settled on the Dismal River first; then he moved to Mullen. He lived in Mullen until he died. He was County Judge for several years. He took pictures besides doing his judicial work.

He had a large family. Leu lives in Whitman, and Kent and his sister, Susie, live in Mullen.

Kent homesteaded around 10 miles northeast of Whitman until he sold his place and moved to Mullen. He and Susie live in their Dad's house. Kent used to paint a lot and Susie worked for years in the grocery store as a bookkeeper for Sank. When Sank sold to Chet Johnson, she stayed on and worked for him. She remained there until Chet sold to Mackie. The other children are scattered around.

Kent used to come and stay with me when I was batching on my Kinkaid claim. I remember that one time he wanted to know if he could bring an Indian pony over and break it in my corral. I told him to bring it along. He led it over. The next day, he saddled it and got on. The horse began to buck and Kent got to laughing. The pony sure shook him up. He hung onto the saddle horn with both hands. The pony would buck across the corral and would have to let up to turn. Kent would get his balance and away it would take off again. It stopped after three trips back and forth. I don't know that it ever bucked again.

The Bowers used to cut posts and haul them to North Platte, seventy-five miles away. They lived in a dugout on the Dismal River for years. Life was hard on Mrs. Bowers. She had to do all the chores while her husband was away. She did the milking, tended garden, looked after the kids and cooked and washed. They put in long hours. The place they lived in was 16x12 feet. They raised six children in the little dugout. The children were all born in it without a doctor or any medical care. People were a hardy lot in those days. Of course, they got plenty of fresh air. As Kent said, it was a wonder how they all lived.

John Pelican

John Pelican was a Russian. He homesteaded east of Cottonwood Lake. He used to come to Charlie Hoyt's quite often. He would walk from Hyannis and stop overnight at the Hoyt's ranch. He lived 9 miles north of Whitman. Once in a while, he would go to Hyannis in a light wagon for supplies. He would always stay all night with Charlie, though.

John bought three sections and batched on it until he died. He sold a section to Ernest Garwood before he died. There was a settlement of Russians west of Charlie Hoyt's place. He sold them work horses at a good price. There aren't many work horses in the country now. Most ranchers use tractors or jeeps.

Frank Phillips

Frank filed on a place 40 miles north of Whitman and lived on it until he bought land from John Pelican. Then he moved on it. He rents it now and lives in California.

The Phillips come back to visit usually every spring. He married Millie Post in the fall of 1910. They never had any children. He is not very healthy now and can't do much.

I always liked Frank and Millie. They used to hunt coyotes a great deal in their jeep and were always accompanied by their hounds. They would hunt at night with a spot light. He always had some cattle and made his living thereby.

Rote Abbott

The Abbotts came to Gordon in 1885. Rote filed a claim in the Grindstone Valley, 20 miles north of Whitman. He had a large family, four boys and four girls. I believe Jim Abbott lived in Grindstone and moved to Whitman in 1896.

Rote's second youngest daughter married George Smith in 1899. Everybody called him Smitty. He lived in Omaha until he was about 12 years old. Clarence Smith was acquainted with George's mother. She asked Clarence to bring George to the sandhills with him to get him off the streets of Omaha. He worked for Clarence for years. He made a good hand.

Gevry filed on a claim 30 miles north of Mullen. He tried to farm but the soil was too sandy. He sold out after a few years and moved to Mullen. His wife ran a restaurant for 45 years.

George and Callie had one girl. She married Joe Payne. They moved west somewhere.

Reuben Long came here from Virginia in 1895 and has been around Mullen for years. He ran a truck for a long time. He knew George Smith for a good many years.

He and Mrs. Smith were married several years after Smithie died. They still live in Mullen. Reuben still does odd jobs around town.

Bryant Greathouse

Bryant came to Grant County on September 30, 1886. He settled close to the railroad, 3 miles west of Whitman. He batched for several years. Jim Walker was his closest neighbor. Perry Martin took a place adjoining Greathouse's proved it and then sold it to Bryant. The Walkers came from Arkansas and lived on the place west of Whitman. They moved back to Arkansas and were gone a couple of years. Greathouse went to Arkansas and got them to move back. He married their second oldest daughter not too long after that.

He built up a nice ranch. He had a boy and a girl. The boy, Marston, lives on part of the place. The girl married, sold her part and moved to Wyoming. Their father was blind for years before he died. He raised Durham cattle and had quite a herd of coach horses.

Bryant had a mare he thought could run. Herman Walker, his brother-in-law, used to hunt coyotes a lot. Herman rode the mare a lot but my horse outran her every time. We were always racing. Bryant was sure she could outrun the dogs. He was going to bet me \$20.00 if Herman had kept still. He wanted to bet him also and Nettie, Bryant's wife, said, "Bryant, you had better keep your money. The kids know which is the fastest."

I told Bryant to come with us, so he did. We jumped two coyotes. My fastest pup took one and all the rest of the dogs took the other. Bryant's shepherd dog went with us. My pup kept throwing the coyote and the shep-

herd finally took hold of the tail-end. The pup caught it by the throat and Bryant killed it with a hammer. He said, "Arlie, I would have bet you, if Herman had only kept still. I had no idea the dogs could run that fast."

George Eckels, another old-timer, and Bryant left Merric County, Nebraska, for the west. George filed on a place 11½ miles east of Whitman. He got his wife to file on a place south of his.

George met Buffalo Bill Cody. He wanted George to help supply beef to the government. That is, buffalo "beef." George wanted Bryant to go in with him. Bryant wouldn't have anything to do with it. He said he was going to get cattle on his own. Eckels had a girl and a boy. Stella lives in Mullen. She owns part of the old place and leases it. Alfred, the boy, owns the rest of it and leases his share also. I think he is on a farm east of Grand Island.

About The Barnebays

William Barnebey came here and settled on a claim, two miles south of Mullen, in Hooker County. He came from New Sharon, Iowa. He traded his land in Iowa for a Mo. Jack and sold it for \$400.00. He then came to Broken Bow. William, Jr., was born there. The family remained in the Bow for two months, while the father came to Mullen and built on his claim. He came from the Bow to Mullen in a covered wagon and an ox team. He built a sod house 20x36 feet. Some of them still live in Mullen.

In 1903, Nan Barnebey taught District #6. She received \$8.00 per month. She had the Jess Thompson and Robert Shimmen's children.

The Cranes

Squire Crane and his brother and their wives came to the sandhills in 1887. They shipped a carload of household goods from Crawfordville, Indiana, to Broken Bow. They stored their furniture in Broken Bow and came to Mullen in a covered wagon. There weren't any trains until 1888 into Mullen. Crane's son, Walter, was born in 1888. Some of them still live around Mullen.

The Boyers

Huge Boyer, his wife and nine sons, settled in Dry Valley in 1886, between the Middle and North Loup Rivers. They raised small grain and dairy cows. Most ranchers just milk enough for their own use now. Many of them buy Olie and hardly anyone bakes bread anymore.

There used to be a settlement of Negroes on the North Loup. They built their church but didn't like the country life. They sold out to the ranchers. Seth Hanna owns the meadow where the cemetery was. He keeps it fenced in by request of the former owners.

The Negroes have all been gone for years. Some of them staked claims 15 miles north of Whitman.

Lizzie K

Lizzie Kime was one of the first teachers in Mullen. She married one of the Wolfendens and lives 40 miles north of Mullen now. She still owns the ranch and one of her sons runs it for her.

Chapter Seventeen

THE BLIZZARD OF 1913

On March 12, 1913, it began to rain. The rain turned into snow on Friday the 13th. When the ranchers awoke, there was a howling blizzard. There were no telephones and no radios, so no storm warning was announced. The ranchers were caught unprepared. Snow clogged the cattle's noses so that they could not breathe. Their eyes froze over; they couldn't see. Many of the cattle drifted into the lakes. Some ranchers had many small calves in their sheds; the snow drifted in and smothered them. Several of the ranchers lost over half their cattle herd. It was mighty tough on the ranchers. They couldn't get to their barns and back without having a stretched wire or a rope to hold onto. A person couldn't see a thing. John Motl kept trying to get to his drugstore and couldn't see. He had to turn back. I was in Halletville, Texas, that winter. I went from there to Grand Junction, Colorado, and raised a crop of beets and cantaloupe. Sugar beets brought in a fair price but the cantaloupes didn't pay for their crates. I gave 21¢ for crates and put them together. There were small crates for common run and larger crates for jumbos. You had to pick every day and haul the food three miles to market. I got 35¢ for 4 dozen. When I got my return, I received 14¢ for 4 dozen.

Dr. Walker

Dr. D. A. Walker was Mullen's first doctor. He had a tough life of it. The snow was so deep that he had to go on horse back many times. He couldn't always make it. There were no roads then, only cow trails in lots of places, and the houses were few and far between. Dr. Walker spent most of his life in the sandhills. He practiced for over 50 years.

In 1907, Dr. Walker married Ona Stephenson. They had two boys. One is a dentist, and the other is an undertaker. Both reside in Mullen. Mullen is the most active town between Alliance and Broken Bow.

There aren't many old-timers left. I used to know almost everyone in the country, but there are many strangers now. The people who were raised here have grown up, so I don't know them. Many of them still known me though.

Chapter Eighteen

MORE ABOUT THE WRIGHTS

George Wright was born on September 5, 1837, in Schuyler County, Illinois. He was married to Mary Charles in 1861 at the age of 24. Mother was eight years younger than he; she was 16 years old.

There are only two of the nine children left—D. B. Wright and myself, A. F. Wright.

Rachel, the third oldest girl, lived at Aline, Oklahoma,

from the time of the opening of the Cherrykee Strip for settlement. She passed away on May 24, 1962, at the age of 93 years, 8 months and 23 days.

Dad Wright joined Co. A, 134th, 15th Missouri Cavalry in 1861 and served 3 years and 9 months. In 1856, he moved to Missouri, and in 1887, moved to Cherry County, Nebraska. He lived in Cherry County for 3 years, then moved to Grant County, 4 miles north of Whitman, so that we kids could go to school. He lived there until 1907, sold everything and moved to Wood River. He died on February 19, 1916, in Wood River, at the age of 79 years, 5 months, and 14 days.

Mother is buried there also. She moved to Colorado after Dad died to be close to some of her children. Two girls and a son lived in Grand Junction. She outlived Dad by several years.

This country was called the Nebraska desert by many people. It certainly has changed. The best beef in the U.S.A. is raised in the sand hills on many large ranches now.

The ranchers have fine houses which cost from 15 to 75 thousand dollars and many other buildings. A ranch of any size, say 20 sections, has a nice house on 2 different valleys, a bunkhouse, and cattle sheds for to use during calving season from March 1 to May 1. Some have calves in February. They get from 250 to two thousand, according to the size of the ranch; some of them get more than 2,000.

Land used to sell as little as \$2.00 per acre; now it sells from \$40.00 to \$60.00 per acre. That is a high price for grazing land.

It takes many acres to summer a cow. The ranchers frequently have a hard time during the winter. During weather. It was 35 below zero and there was always a

high wind. The weather was hard on the stock. The the winter of 1961-1962, there was a great deal of cold ground was very dry and the wind blew constantly.

More About The Wolfendens

The Wolfendens came here in 1885 and settled 40 miles north of Mullen. Grandma Wolfenden is still on the ranch. Her husband died a few years ago. Their son, Warren, runs the ranch. They run a lot of Hereford cattle. They have large hay meadows. They put up 1500 to 2000 tons of hay and bale a great deal and turn their their cattle on it when they take them off the summer range.

Nebraska

Nebraska is one of the richest states in the Union. It is free of debt. It has several large dams to hold water for irrigation. They take water from Lake McConaughy, north of Ogalalla, to quite a distance into Kansas to irrigate the crops.

They are building a thru-fare 4-lane highway from Grand Island, west along the north bank of the Platte River, and they are making many lakes. All of them will be stocked with fish and will draw thousands of tourists traveling from coast to coast.

